

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an aromatic compound isomer substituted with alkyl group(s) and/or halogen atom(s) comprising subjecting a starting mixture containing the aromatic compound isomer to adsorptive separation by the use of a zeolite-containing adsorbent and a desorbent, ~~and~~ subjecting the desorbent, after it has been collected from the adsorptive separation, to a method selected from the group consisting of distillation, purging, and ~~absorption~~ adsorption to a solid ~~absorbent~~ adsorbent to achieve a level of impurities below 1,000 ppm by weight, the impurities being selected from the group consisting of water, hydrochloric acid, phenols, dimers of aromatic compounds, unsaturated hydrocarbon-containing compounds and oxygen-containing compounds, and after having been processed to remove impurities, supplying the desorbent ~~supplied to the adsorptive separation such that, after having been processed for removing impurities, the desorbent is selected from the group consisting of water, hydrochloric acid, phenols, dimers of aromatic compounds, unsaturated hydrocarbon-containing compounds and oxygen-containing compounds.~~

2. (Original) The method for producing an aromatic compound isomer as claimed in claim 1, wherein the aromatic compound has a benzene ring or heterocyclic ring structure.

3. (Original) The method for producing an aromatic compound isomer as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein the aromatic compound is ring-substituted with at least one halogen element.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) The method for producing an aromatic compound isomer as claimed in claim 1, wherein the impurities in the desorbent are removed by replacing a part of the used desorbent with an impurity-free fresh desorbent.

6. (Previously Presented) The method for producing an aromatic compound isomer as

claimed in claim 1, wherein all or part of the desorbent to be supplied to the adsorptive separation is first continuously or intermittently supplied to a step of removing impurities from it, and then supplied to the adsorptive separation.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an aromatic compound isomer substituted with alkyl group(s) and/or halogen atom(s) comprising subjecting a starting mixture containing the aromatic compound isomer to adsorptive separation by the use of a zeolite-containing adsorbent and a desorbent, ~~and~~ subjecting the desorbent, after it has been collected from the adsorptive separation, to a method selected from the group consisting of distillation, purging, and ~~absorption~~ adsorption to a solid ~~absorbent~~ adsorbent to achieve a level of impurities below 1,000 ppm by weight, the impurities being oxygen-containing or high boiling point compounds, and after having been processed to remove impurities, supplying the desorbent supplied to the adsorptive separation such that, ~~after having been processed for removing oxygen-containing or high boiling point compound impurities, the desorbent is selected from the group consisting of water, hydrochloric acid, phenols, dimers of aromatic compounds, unsaturated hydrocarbon-containing compounds and oxygen-containing compounds.~~

8. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an aromatic compound isomer substituted with alkyl group(s) and/or halogen atom(s) comprising subjecting a starting mixture containing the aromatic compound isomer to adsorptive separation by the use of a zeolite-containing adsorbent and a desorbent, ~~and~~ subjecting the desorbent, after it has been collected from the adsorptive separation, to a method selected from the group consisting of distillation, purging, and ~~absorption~~ adsorption to a solid ~~absorbent~~ adsorbent to achieve a level of impurities below 1,000 ppm by weight, the impurities having an aldehyde group or a carboxyl group, and after having been processed to remove impurities, supplying the desorbent supplied to the adsorptive separation such

~~that, after having been processed for removing impurities having an aldehyde group or a carboxyl group, the desorbent is selected from the group consisting of water, hydrochloric acid, phenols, dimers of aromatic compounds, unsaturated hydrocarbon containing compounds and oxygen-containing compounds.~~

9. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an aromatic compound isomer substituted with alkyl group(s) and/or halogen atom(s) comprising subjecting a starting mixture containing the aromatic compound isomer to adsorptive separation by the use of a zeolite-containing adsorbent and a desorbent, and subjecting the desorbent, after it has been collected from the adsorptive separation, to a method selected from the group consisting of distillation, purging, and ~~absorption~~ adsorption to a solid ~~absorbent~~ adsorbent to achieve a level of impurities below 1,000 ppm by weight, the impurities having been produced during adsorptive separation, and after having been processed to remove impurities, supplying the desorbent supplied to the adsorptive separation ~~such that, after having been processed for removing impurities produced during adsorptive separation, the desorbent is selected from the group consisting of water, hydrochloric acid, phenols, dimers of aromatic compounds, unsaturated hydrocarbon containing compounds and oxygen-containing compounds.~~

10. (Currently Amended) A method for producing an aromatic compound isomer substituted with alkyl group(s) and/or halogen atom(s) comprising subjecting a starting mixture containing the aromatic compound isomer to adsorptive separation by the use of a zeolite-containing adsorbent and a desorbent, and subjecting the desorbent, after it has been collected from the adsorptive separation, to a method selected from the group consisting of distillation, purging, and ~~absorption~~ adsorption to a solid ~~absorbent~~ adsorbent to achieve a level of impurities below 1,000 ppm by weight, the impurities having been produced during adsorptive separation and being selected

~~from the group consisting of oxygen-containing or high boiling point compounds and compounds having an aldehyde group or a carboxyl group, and after having been processed to remove impurities, supplying the desorbent supplied to the adsorptive separation such that, after having been processed for removing oxygen-containing or high boiling point compounds impurities produced during adsorptive separation having an aldehyde group or a carboxyl group, the desorbent is selected from the group consisting of water, hydrochloric acid, phenols, dimers of aromatic compounds, unsaturated hydrocarbon-containing compounds and oxygen-containing compounds.~~

11. (New) A method of producing a composition comprising a desired aromatic isomer substituted with alkyl group(s) and/or halogen atom(s), the method comprising:

(a) subjecting a starting mixture containing the desired aromatic isomer to adsorptive separation by the use of a zeolite-containing adsorbent and a desorbent, the adsorptive separation producing impurities;

(b) withdrawing a fluid from the adsorptive separation, the fluid comprising desorbent and at least a portion of the desired aromatic isomer;

(c) separating the desorbent from the desired aromatic isomer;

(d) collecting the desired aromatic isomer to form the composition;

(e) removing impurities from the desorbent to achieve an impurity level below 1,000 ppm by weight; and

(f) after removing impurities, supplying the desorbent to the adsorptive separation.

12. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the fluid is extract.

13. (New) The method of claim 12 further comprising the steps of withdrawing a raffinate from the adsorptive separation, the raffinate comprising a second portion of desorbent, a second portion of the desired aromatic isomer and at least one other isomer;

separating the second portion of the desorbent from the second portion of the desired aromatic isomer and other isomer;

removing impurities from the second portion of the desorbent to achieve an impurity level below 1,000 ppm by weight;

after removing impurities, supplying the second portion of the desorbent to the adsorptive separation.

14. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the fluid is raffinate.

15. (New) The method of claim 14 further comprising the steps of
withdrawing an extract from the adsorptive separation, the extract comprising a second portion of desorbent, a second portion of the desired aromatic isomer and at least one other isomer;
separating the second portion of the desorbent from the second portion of the desired aromatic isomer and other isomer;

removing impurities from the second portion of the desorbent to achieve an impurity level below 1,000 ppm by weight;

after removing impurities, supplying the second portion of the desorbent to the adsorptive separation.

16. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the step of removing impurities comprises a method selected from the group consisting of distillation, purging, and adsorption to a solid adsorbent.

17. (New) The method of claim 11 wherein the impurities produced during the adsorptive separation are oxygen-containing compounds, high boiling point compounds, compounds having an aldehyde group or compounds having a carboxyl group.